LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
JUL 2 1968
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BX7148
.C8T7

# EPISCOPAL

# ORDINATION AND BAPTISM

OF

DOUBTFUL VALIDITY AT THE PRESENT DAY;

AS SHOWN BY

BISHOP BROWNELL,

IN HIS

LATE CHARGE TO THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF CONNECTICUT.

---

NEW HAVEN:
PRINTED BY B. L. HAMLEN.

1843.

## BISHOP BROWNELL'S CHARGE.

---

The charge of Bishop Brownell to the clergy of the diocese of Connecticut, delivered at their annual convention holden at Hartford in June last, bears with very great severity on those whom he styles "Dissenters;" under which epithet he includes all who are not of the Episcopal or Papal denomination. The grand, elementary position, by which he designates the distinguishing feature of. the true church is, that its clergy have a regular succession from those who were invested with ministerial power in the apostolic age, of whom the bishops of this day occupy the same place in the church as the apostles did in that. His principal and leading object is, to show the illegitimacy of any other priesthood than that which then existed, and the utter inability of any who are not of the regular line of succession, to constitute a minister of either of the three orders. Christ constituted the apostles with power to ordain others, and no ordination is of any validity but that which is derived from their imposition of hands, through the succession of ages down to the present day.

The Bishop admits, that there is no *command* to enforce their permanency; but contends that no such command is necessary. That I may not do him injustice, I will quote the very language he adopts on pages 12 and 13 of the printed copy:

"If," says he, "the Christian religion itself was designed to be permanent, as no man can doubt, then all its requirements must be of perpetual obligation, and *all* the *fundamental* institutions, through the instrumentality of which it was designed to be continued, must have the same unchanging perpetuity. *There needs no express command*, as some have maintained, to enforce their per-

manency. Unless there be a *clear intimation* that *any* apostolic institution was designed to be of a temporary nature, it must be assumed to be a standing regulation of the church. For if it be contended that any such standing regulation may be abandoned because it is not enjoined by express command, it may, with equal reason, be concluded that any point of Christian doctrine may be renounced, where there is no special command for its observance; a course of reasoning which would lead to utter confusion in the faith and practice of the church."

I have no doubt of the entire sincerity with which this proposition is advanced by Bishop Brownell, and for the present purpose I shall assume it to be strictly true. All ordinations, all administrations of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, were in the time of the apostles performed either by themselves, or by those ministers who derived their authority from them. The ordinance of baptism was of peculiar importance and solemnity. The Bishop denominates it "one of the most solemn institutions of the Savior." He says, (page 21,) that "the true economy of the Christian religion regards men as by nature the 'children of wrath.' It takes them from this state, which is called in Scripture 'the kingdom of Satan,' and transfers them *by* BAPTISM, into the family, household and kingdom of the Savior, where they are called 'children of God,' 'members of Christ,' and 'heirs of the kingdom of heaven.'"—"After baptism the person is regarded as in a *state of covenant relationship with God*, and *becomes* entitled to the aids of his Holy Spirit. This change of state, effected in baptism, is called in Scripture and in the language of the baptismal office, *regeneration*."

If, then, baptism was an institution of the Savior, and if, as must be admitted, it was never administered in that day but by the apostles and ministers duly ordained; if, as the Bishop insists, it was an essential prerequisite of admission to the church, or as he styles it, "covenant relationship

with God;" if it was by this ordinance that men "were taken from the kingdom of Satan," or the "state of wrath," in which, as the Bishop truly says, all men are by nature; it is, as he strenuously insists, one of the most important of all religious institutions. Connect with this the proposition, that what was done by the Savior and his apostles, although unaccompanied by any express command, is as obligatory forever as if commanded expressly; and it follows that no baptism is of any validity, unless administered, as in that day, by a duly ordained minister, deriving his power in an unbroken line from the apostles. Administration of it by any other hand, would, according to the opinion of the Bishop, be virtually a violation of an express command of Christ. However true it may be, as stated in the 26th article of the church, recited by the Bishop in a note on page 23, "that the sacraments be effectual because of *Christ's institution and promise*, although they be administered by evil men;" yet if they are administered by laymen, who have no power, but on the contrary are forbidden to do it, the administration is certainly void. Although my agent may be a very dishonest man, yet his act, if done in conformity with my order, is valid and obligatory. But if a man, however pure his morals, who is not my agent, acts against my express orders, whatever he does in my name is utterly void. The article, therefore, does not mean, that the "evil men" whose acts are valid, are not in clerical orders, nor that they are expressly forbidden to do the act, but only that they are not pious men. And this, as Episcopalians hold, is equally true of every other exercise of power by one who is duly authorized. Therefore the ordinations, by which the clerical succession is transmitted through the most corrupt periods of the Papal church, are held valid, because those by whom they were performed, although "evil men," were men in orders. It would be hard, indeed, to require the person baptized, or his sponsors, to *see the heart* of the

priest. It is enough that he is a lawfully constituted minister. That and that only is indispensable to the *validity* of his official administrations. But as, in the days of the apostles, none administered baptism but regular ministers, it is equal to a command that no others shall do it now. There is no instance in which any person was ever admitted to holy orders who was not a member of the church, in the time of the apostles; and baptism, as the Bishop insists, is the very means by which men are taken from the world and become "members of the household of faith."

The doctrine of the Bishop may be briefly stated in the following propositions.

I. Whatever was instituted by Christ and the apostles was *commanded to be perpetual.*

II. There can be no lawful minister who is not ordained by their successors, and they again by others, and so on, up to the apostles.

III. As no others, than such lawful ministers, baptized in the days of the apostles, it is virtually commanded that *no others shall have the power to do it.*

IV. As membership with the church cannot exist until baptism, "by which alone men are transferred from the kingdom of Satan;" and as no minister was ever ordained in the time of the apostles, who was not baptized, it is contrary to Christ's command that *any but members of the church* DULY BAPTIZED, should be ordained.

V. The ordination of any one who has not been admitted into the church by baptism, is opposed to apostolic usage, and therefore forbidden, and is utterly void.

I am not about to controvert, as I said before, the principles of the Bishop, or the consequences which flow from them. If they are correct, however, there is no minister in the Episcopal church who has not been baptized by a minister of that church, who has any ministerial power, by whomsoever he may have been ordained. No others can

belong to the church, or be within "the covenant mercies of God;" much less can they be its ministers. The ordination of one who cannot be ordained leaves him where it found him. As no unbaptized person was ever made an apostle or minister in the days of the apostles, and as what was done then is this day commanded and binding forever, it is as certain as that two and two make four, that there can be no lawful bishop, priest or deacon who has not been baptized; and as baptism by a layman, that is, by a Presbyterian or Congregational minister, or any other "*dissenter*," is no baptism at all; those who now officiate in the Episcopal church in holy orders, who have received no other baptism, are not in the ministry. They cannot, according to the Bishop's charge, ordain, baptize, administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or exercise government in the church. All baptisms and ordinations from their hands are void. All apostolical successions which are claimed, but derived from an unbaptized minister, at ever so remote a period, are void through every successive generation, and will continue so to the end of the world. "*Ex nihillo nihil fit.*"

There has heretofore been much difficulty in tracing the succession of each minister back to the apostles; but the principles of this charge have augmented the difficulty an hundred fold. Christ and his apostles commanded, by the usage of that day, that baptized persons only should be ordained, and that none should be baptized at all, unless the ordinance was administered by a priest in orders.

Young Mr. Hewitt adopted sound reasoning when he applied to Dr. Croswell to rebaptize him. He doubtless supposed the Doctor himself had been baptized, or, upon his own principles, he would not have applied to him. If it should turn out, on investigation, as has long been commonly understood, that Bishops Seabury and Jarvis, the only predecessors of Bishop Brownell, were never baptized except by "dissenters," it would make great havoc

in that diocese. Thousands who thought themselves regenerated by the baptism administered by those venerable men, or by the clergymen whom they ordained, have gone to the grave with a joyful but groundless hope. They must have died "children of wrath" and in "the kingdom of Satan," when they honestly supposed they had been "transferred *by baptism* into the family, household and kingdom of the Savior." Many now living who left the "dissenters," and, to use the language of the Bishop, (page 30,) "*sought for repose* in our Scriptural *standards* of faith and primitive *forms* of worship," have been long in a state of mental quietude, from a similar mistaken confidence. A large proportion of the ministers of that denomination, throughout the United States, were once dissenters, and have never been rebaptized. Those who have failed of "regeneration" by the only means which a Savior has appointed, will with difficulty find a lawful clergyman to rescue them from their perilous condition.

The Bishop certainly deserves the gratitude of the church, for having thus frankly exhibited this appalling condition of both priests and people. All who believe, with him, that there can be no regeneration or salvation without baptism—no baptism but by a priest who derives his power by an unbroken succession from the apostles; and that even that is vain unless the priest himself has been duly baptized as well as ordained, by one possessing like power and qualifications; if they consider how large a proportion of those in Episcopal orders have had none but lay baptism, and how difficult it has consequently become to ascertain who has the power of commanding "the aids of God's Holy Spirit" and who has not, they will begin, with breathless earnestness, to inquire into their own condition, and seek, through this dark field of investigation, the hands which alone can save them from eternal ruin.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01082 0258

DATE DUE

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| MAR 8 | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| GAYLORD | | | PRINTED IN U.S.A. |